

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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General Description of Plant

1. Plant No. 393 was supposedly the largest optical plant in the USSR. Primarily it produced optical lenses for photographic and other optical equipment. It also produced, among other things, cameras, optical measuring instruments, and searchlights. The German specialists at the plant were engaged in developing and improving experimental optical equipment. They were not employed in serial production except in producing as a side line small lots of electrical motors. The motors were installed in equipment assembled in the Soviet sector of the plant.

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Planning

3. At the beginning of each month, the Soviet chief of Shop No. 36 called in the various section chiefs and handed them their monthly production plans. Plans were drawn up for each individual section on the basis of a calendar month. The shop chief had presumably received these plans from a planning office which was responsible for such matters throughout the entire plant.

4. These monthly plans were drawn up in detail. We were not allowed to alter them or to substitute one project for another. They were not particularly difficult to fulfill and imposed no ridiculous demands. Our shop failed to fulfill its plan on perhaps three or four occasions.

5. The monthly plan for each section was registered on a large chart posted on a wall. By checking on progress registered on the chart, the shop or section boss was able to control plan-fulfillment in the course of a month. Neither Party organs nor other outside agencies exercised any plan-control functions within Shop No. 36.

6. Although the German shop functioned quite independently of the rest of the plant, some of the parts for equipment which we in the German workshop were supposed to assemble or construct were made by Soviet shops in the plant. Delivery of these parts was frequently late, arriving in the latter part of a monthly production period. Apparently the Soviet shops made no great efforts to fulfill our orders, "as the Germans received too many bonuses anyway". By the middle of the month, the chief of the workshop section was able to see which parts were not on hand for the equipment which we had to assemble during the production month. He brought the matter up with the chief of Shop No. 36, who in turn traced the problem down to the responsible part of the plant.

7. Although the Soviet boss of Shop No. 36 frequently said that he would be hanged if he failed to meet his monthly plan, the results of such failures were not so terrifying. The shop chief simply stressed in his monthly report that delivery failures or other factors beyond his control were to blame for the matter. Then representatives of the Party or trade union stepped in and held a few meetings urging greater efforts on the part of the workers. At worst, the workers and employees in the shop were paid last if it failed to meet its plan.

8. Poor organization was the main cause of production problems or planning fulfillment failure. Either other shops within the plant failed

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to deliver the necessary parts on time or enough raw materials were not on hand. As a result, those engaged in final assembly operations were usually idle for the first two weeks of each month. All parts necessary for the assembly of a given piece of equipment had not yet been received. Then the parts were delivered in a great rush in the latter part of the month. Assembly-line workers had to toil day and night during the last two weeks in order to meet their monthly plan. This situation was true in the Soviet as well as German sections which were engaged in assembly operations. This had less effect on the operations of the German shop, as it produced only small electrical motors on a serial basis.

Working Conditions

9. All Soviet workers at Plant No. 393 were placed in eight wage categories. Workers performing the most complicated and skilled work were placed in the eighth wage group. All Soviet workers were paid according to the norm wage system. Production norms were calculated according to the time required to complete a given work process. A calculator was assigned to each shop who established the norm for each work assignment. I believe that such an employee was referred to in Russian as tekhnolog.

10. Standard norms were established for repetitive, uncomplicated work. These norms were listed in a norm code which was used throughout the plant. The calculator determined production norms himself when atypical or complicated work assignments were involved. As most of the work performed in our workshop was of this nature, our calculator (he was a German communist) was in a position to favor Party members in our shop in determining their norms.

11. The following are typical monthly wages of Soviet workers and employees at Plant No. 393:

Stockroom employee	200 - 400 rubles
Mechanic (hard worker)	800 - 900 "
Mechanic (beginner)	500 - 700 "
Lathe operator (hard worker)	1,200 "
Mechanic in photography shop (a rare case)	2,400 "

12. The average Soviet mechanic or lathe operator who fulfilled his production norms by 100% received from 800 to 1,000 rubles per month. It should be noted that each wage group had a ceiling wage. It was possible, for example, that a mechanic so overfulfilled his norms as to earn (in theory) 1,500 rubles per month. However, he would be paid only 1,200 rubles per month, as that was the top wage allowed in his wage category.

13. Only shop chiefs, their administrative assistants, and higher personnel received bonuses. Although I have not the slightest information concerning the regulations governing the distribution of bonuses, it was more than clear that this bonus system was simply a method to encourage cut-throat competition between various shops and sections. The total salaries of higher Soviet personnel consisted in large part of bonuses. As bonuses were distributed only when production schedules were met or surpassed, these individuals were naturally concerned that the shops or sections under their supervision fulfilled or overfulfilled their monthly plans.

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14. I believe that many Soviet workers at Plant No. 393 had been ordered to work there by State authorities and had not obtained this employment on their own initiative. Plant No. 393 had been located in the Urals prior to our arrival, having been evacuated to that area during the war. After the war, some of the plant personnel were transferred to the Krasnogorsk plant while others remained in Siberia. Undoubtedly those who returned were transferred by government order. This move had resulted in many broken families. Either the workers had not been able to find adequate housing in Krasnogorsk, or other family members could not afford to give up employment at the former location.

15. Soviet skilled workers at Plant No. 393 were by no means the equal of their German counterparts. Their greatest shortcoming was their inability to master precision work. This was partially the result of inadequate training. Furthermore, many Soviet workers at the plant were recent recruits from rural areas. They not only received poorer training than urban-born workers but were also unaccustomed to the traditions of industrial work.

16. The Soviet wage system, based on time- or piece-work, discouraged the painstaking efforts required in precision mechanics. This factor was a second major shortcoming of Soviet workers. It is more desirable in constructing optical instruments to take your time and obtain the desired precision rather than produce as many items as possible which lack the necessary exactness.

17. The strongest side of Soviet skilled workers was their remarkable ability to copy industrial products and to put these articles into production. Soviet engineers and workers evidently developed a knack of copying industrial products as a result of their strong dependence on Western technical innovations.

18. I observed that Soviet engineers and scientists engaged in the field of optics were notably weak on one point. Although well versed in theory, they were just like children when it came to the applications of theory to practice.

19. Soviet brigades and shops at Plant No. 393, as well as individual workers, engaged in various forms of "socialist competition". Individual workers signed "socialist pledges" while brigades and shops engaged in contests with one another. In my opinion, socialist competition in Soviet plants was by no means as important as indicated in the Soviet press. The Soviet workers at our plant certainly did not regard these measures seriously. They could be characterized as paper agreements, as mere formalities. They had little effect in achieving their goals of raising and improving the quality of production as well as reducing waste. In fact, socialist competitions probably increased waste and lowered the quality of finished products. The constant observation and pressure which accompanied them created tension and nervousness among the workers and therefore lowered efficiency.

Party Membership and Activities

20. It was obvious that Soviet non-Party members employed at our plant distrusted and disliked their fellow workers who were members of the Communist

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Party. Party members were disliked because they received higher wages without deserving them. They were distrusted because they acted as spies among the mass of the workers. When I talked with Soviet workers who were not members of the Party, they always told me to quiet down when a Party official approached us. Non-Party members apparently feared that Party officials would report them for fraternizing with or for spreading malicious stories among the Germans. One Soviet worker complained to me that a Party representative was stationed in every apartment building and had the task of reporting any suspicious activities on the part of its occupants. All in all, non-Party members tried to keep their distance from members of the Party. The two groups did not mix socially but remained aloof from one another.

21. Soviet workers who were members of the Party were evidently given preferential treatment in regard to wages. They were frequently assigned lower production norms. At least one Soviet mechanic who worked alongside of me complained one day that he was being paid less than a particular Party member doing the same type of work, even though the latter was less qualified.

22. Favoritism was evidently shown to Party members in assigning them billets. They were the first to obtain rooms in the apartment buildings vacated by the first group of Germans to depart from Krasnogorsk. I also heard that they were given preference in receiving leave at special recreation centers operated by the trade union.

23. Party representatives joined with the trade union in holding shop meetings. These meetings were held for the purpose of encouraging better production efforts from the Soviet workers. They usually ended with a "voluntary" resolution on the part of the workers pledging themselves to overfulfill their norms or to give up a holiday for the sake of plan fulfillment.

24. Party agitators frequently held brief lectures for Soviet workers in individual shops or departments. At these meetings, which lasted for about ten minutes before the lunch hour, the lecturer simply read aloud an article out of Pravda. The Soviet workers showed absolutely no interest in the entire proceedings. The agitator could have been talking to a stone wall.

25. I believe that the Party office within the plant held weekly meetings or political classes for Soviet Party members. The plant's Party office was also responsible for staging political demonstrations. It was surprising to observe the lack of enthusiasm shown by the Soviet citizenry at May Day celebrations in Krasnogorsk. The only people who took part in the parade itself were Party members, some Germans who wanted to be sure of an early trip home, and children above all. There were few spectators at these demonstrations in consideration of the fact that the entire population of Krasnogorsk and neighboring kolkhozy was expected to attend.

Political Indoctrination of German Specialists

26. When the German specialists first arrived at Krasnogorsk, the plant authorities set up a communal kitchen and provided us with food, supposedly at no cost. The Soviet authorities told us that we were guests of the Soviet Union. However, we were so shocked when plant officials presented us with bills for the food that we decided to abolish the communal kitchen.

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33. The Antifa leaders also carried out some typical "economic" functions. They forced through a resolution from the group which stated that the German specialists were spending too much time on the job in making products for their own use. It suggested that the German specialists be required to work according to norms. This suggestion was "accepted" by Mrs. Pushkina. Norm calculators were assigned to each section. Later on, socialist competitions were introduced among the German specialists on the initiative of the Antifa activists. Most workers paid no attention to these activities. Anyway, the Antifa members always came out ahead, as the norm calculators favored them in establishing their norms. Members of the Antifa group also performed another side function in acting as informers among the German specialists for Soviet authorities. We had to be careful when (for example) relating the latest joke from RIAS about the SED. It is more than likely that some German specialists not repatriated with us in July 1952 can thank German informers for their present residence in the USSR.

Trade Union Activities

34. Trade union activities at Plant No. 393 were carried out by a zakom headed by a secretary. This committee was composed of one representative from each shop in the plant. The plant's savkom performed two primary functions so far as I could determine. It aided the Party organization in holding shop meetings and in effecting other measures designed to improve and increase production. It also acted as a sort of grievance committee for the Soviet workers in the plant. The savkom also sponsored numerous cultural activities for Soviet workers and employees.

35. Theoretically, a Soviet worker was entitled to lodge a complaint with the savkom in the event that he did not wish to work overtime as ordered by his supervisor. However, this was not the case in practice. Zakom representatives worked hand in hand with the shop chiefs. And, if it was apparent that his shop was not keeping up with its production schedule, a shop chief would announce that overtime work was in order at a meeting called for that purpose and no one dared raise his voice in disapproval. A shop chief was especially interested in seeing his shop fulfill its monthly plan, as this was a condition for his receiving a bonus. However, the average Soviet worker was not too opposed to these heavy-handed measures imposing overtime work. He needed every ruble he could earn to support his family.

36. Workers were also permitted to lodge complaints with the zakom concerning unsatisfactory working conditions. However, an individual shop chief was so powerful that he could make it difficult for any worker who caused unpleasantness by raising a complaint.

Comments: The source's comments on planning procedures, working conditions, Party and trade union activities at Plant No. 393 are remarkably similar to information presented on these topics by previous sources in this series. Almost all earlier sources had been employed in Soviet research institutes and experimental production plants. It would appear that information previously gathered on these topics is more or less applicable to Soviet plants engaged in serial production.

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